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To:

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From:

Eric Scmidt
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Date:

12/23/88

Subject:

Update, "Government Center 2000"

Attached please find updated briefing material on the "Government Center 2000" Project. Revisions have been made to the Conceptual Framework section, a Project Area Plan has been drawn, and Design Element Sketches and Narratives have been prepared.

The next meeting of the project advisory group is scheduled for Wednesday, December 28th at 11:30 a.m. in the PCR. Please review the attached materials in preparation for Wednesday's discussion. The Director has indicated his desire to make a project presentation to the Mayor in early January.

[Boston Redevelopment Authority]





GOVERNMENT CENTER 2000 PROJECT

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- 1. Historical Perspective**
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12/22/88

A very faint, large watermark-like image of a classical building with four columns and a pediment is visible in the background.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
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<http://www.archive.org/details/governmentcenter1988bost>

GOVERNMENT CENTER 2000:

Historical Perspective

More than 350 years ago, a journey in search of human rights and political and religious freedom ended at the shores of Boston Harbor.

A short distance from where the earliest Bostonians built the first town dock, they established a "center," one of government, commerce, religion and education. That center was to become, and remains today, the birthplace of freedom and democracy in the New World. From it, the spirit of human rights and the principles of democratic government have spread far and wide across this land and over the oceans by which it is bound.

Like the influence of Athens and Rome before it, the "Spirit of Boston" has inspired not only the governmental and political philosophy of America, but efforts for human rights and the freedom and dignity of man throughout the world. Yet nowhere does the spirit burn brighter than at the center of the flame.

The history of Boston's "center," today known as Government Center, is one reflected in streets and buildings which remain, today, much the same as they were in pre-revolutionary Boston. On the site of the Old State House stood the original Boston Town House, first built in 1657, and reconstructed in 1711. Until the construction of Faneuil Hall in 1742, the Town House served as the seat of both local and provincial government, as well as the center of commerce. It was outside the Town House that the Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770. Six years later, the Declaration of Independence was first read at the same site.

In the post-revolutionary period, Boston's center continued to develop as a locus of both commercial and civic activity. The construction of the Quincy

Market Buildings in 1825 -- on landfill where the Town Dock once stood -- and numerous private commercial buildings contributed much to the city's development as a regional hub of commerce and an international port-of-call. Similarly, construction of Boston's original Federal Building, courthouse and prison, as well as the Customs House tower, furthered the area's importance as a center of government.

From the middle of the 19th century until the early 20th century, the Government Center area took on the additional dimension of a "service" sector, comprised of luxurious theatres, hotels and restaurants. As the City expanded into the Back Bay and elsewhere, however, the area's reputation declined from one of luxury to more tawdry forms of accomodations and entertainment. Despite proximity to governmental, retail and financial districts, retail values in the area between Scollay Square and Union Square declined throughout the first half of the 1900's.

As early as 1917, city planners had envisioned a civic center in this section of Downton Boston. Not until 1930, however, was the Scollay Square area actually chosen, and little activity took place until Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949.

Classified as an "urban renewal area" under Title I of Housing Act, Scollay Square and environs became one of the target areas in a comprehensive redevelopment plan developed in the mid-1950's. Central to the plan was the construction of a complex of new government buildings, including a new City Hall, a new Federal Building, State office buildings and a new courthouse. All but the new courthouse were constructed in the early to mid 1960's.

With the redevelopment, in the late 1970's, of the Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market Buildings as a vibrant retail and entertainment district, the Government

Center area has taken on yet another dimension, though not one totally divorce from one of its original functions. As a mecca for nearly 9 million tourists and visitors each year, the area presents an excellent opportunity and historically appropriate location to link the human rights and democratic value principles on which Boston and the Nation were founded with the shared principles of other nations throughout the world.

GOVERNMENT CENTER 2000

Conceptual Framework

I. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The policy objective of the "Government Center 2000" Project is to create, through the introduction of public art, sculpture, monuments/memorials and the redesign of open spaces, symbols of Boston's respect for and commitment to the principles of international human rights.

II. PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the project is to coordinate the planning of public and private development within the Government Center area in such a manner as to maximize opportunities for public art, sculpture, historic monuments and other forms of cultural enrichment.

For the purposes of this project, the term "Government Center Area" will include streets and buildings bounded by Cambridge Street on the west, Sudbury Street on the north, State Street (including the Old State House) on the south, and the Central Artery on the east.

III. GOALS FOR GOVERNMENT CENTER CENTRAL AREA PLAN

1. To redefine the Government Center area as a place where the concepts of international human rights and democracy are honored and presented for viewing and interaction by the public.
2. To reinforce, particularly in City Hall Plaza, the concept of civic space as

a place for public debate and recognition of democratic principles fundamental to the United States and freedom-loving people everywhere.

3. To balance the existing retail activity of the Faneuil Hall area with the historic background and current civic activities of city, state and federal agencies in the Government Center area.
4. To physically integrate the City Hall Plaza area to Parcel P-7, Faneuil Hall, Customs House, Blackstone block area and adjacent 60 State Street and Bank of New England office towers through a new pedestrian bridge and the redesign of New Congress Street.
5. To plan this central area of Government Center/Faneuil Hall, Quincy Market on a parallel tract to the larger IPOD district planning efforts.
6. To create three subareas within the district for the establishment and location of human rights monument or memorial elements within an interconnected sequence of spaces.
 - a. Historic loop - Old State House to Blackstone block to Custom House.
 - b. Government loop - City Hall, State and Federal offices.
 - c. Boston Common to Waterfront via Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market.
7. To redesign the New Congress Street corridor which presently bisects the planning area, separating the historic areas from the civic/government activities.

8. To redesign the Government Center Plaza area through the establishment of a new monument(s) to the concepts of democracy, self-determination, human rights, both nationally and internationally.
9. To establish entry portal elements at each of the six public parking structures and MBTA Station's locations which will act as the major gateway points to the area.
 - a. Aquarium parking garage and Aquarium stop.
 - b. Washington Street Corridor/parking and State Street stop.
 - c. Tremont Street Corridor/parking and Park Street stop.
 - d. Cambridge Street Corridor/parking and Charles Street stop.
 - e. Government garage/P-7 and Orange Line Government Center stop.
 - f. Clinton Street garage/Central Artery and Callahan tunnel.
10. To rebuild portions of City Hall at the ground levels in order to expand public activities at the ground levels and increase access to and through the building.
11. To locate a new Federal Courthouse at the J.F.K. site in order to expand the activities around Government Center Plaza.
12. To integrate this area into the larger district and downtown area through the connection to other open spaces.

IV. PROJECT STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The strategy for achieving the project goal will be to join, to the extent possible, the efforts and resources of corporations, architects and government so as to maximize efficiencies in overall design and cost requirements for both planned and unplanned projects.

Implementation of the project strategy will be facilitated through a public/private design partnership under the coordination of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

V. PROJECT DESIGN CONCEPT

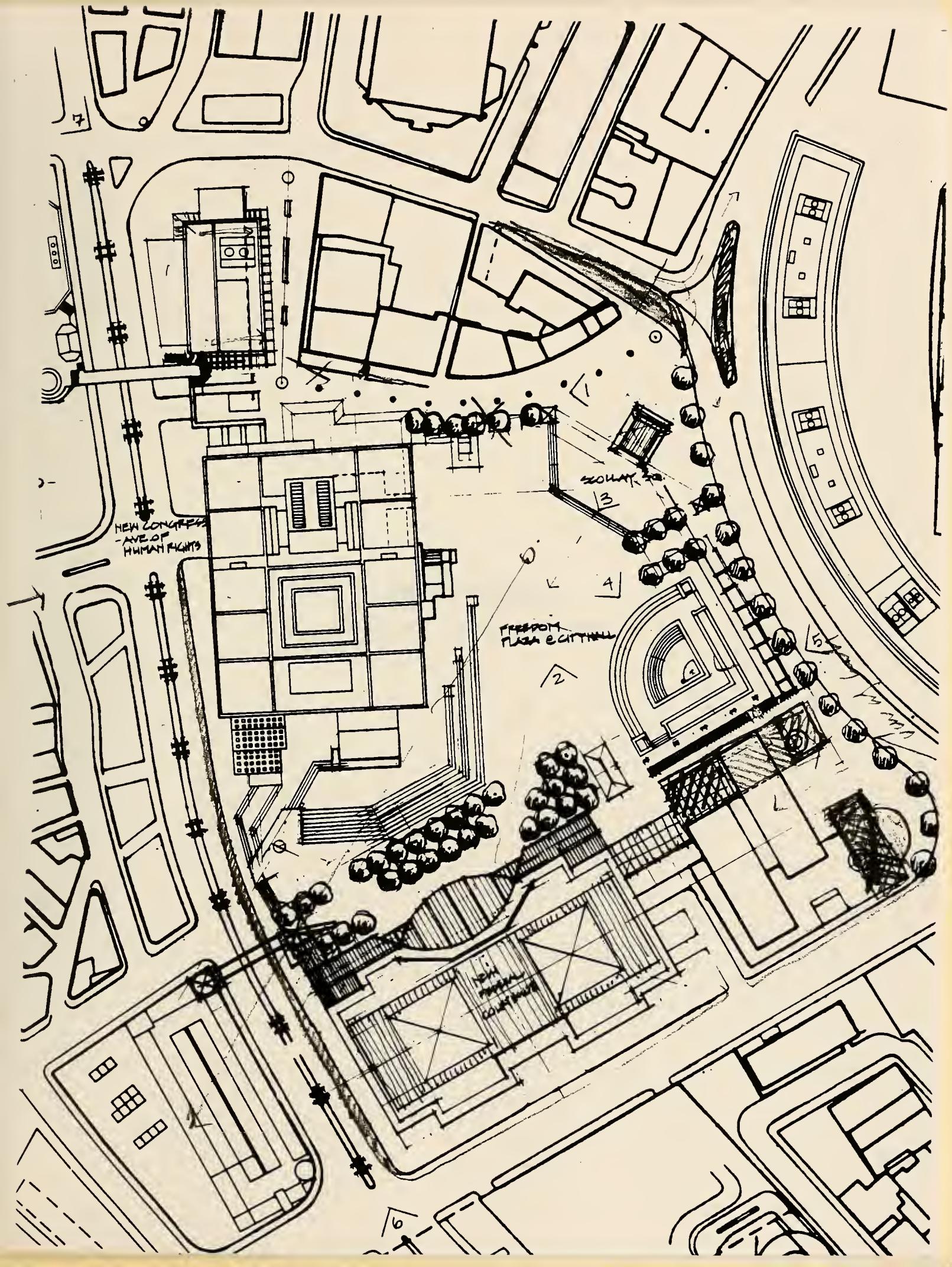
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part developed*

The design concept for the Government Center area incorporates three major planning and design actions: 1) the retail activities of Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market and Blackstone area will be reinforced by public uses in the City Hall Plaza area; 2) the City Hall Plaza area will be redeveloped through the addition of a new Federal Courthouse facility, on the low-rise Kennedy building site, and the redesign of the City Hall Plaza as a "civic space" for public gathering and the viewing and interaction with sculptural elements which depict the concepts of "human rights" and democracy as well as the struggles world-wide for self-determination; and 3) the integration of these two areas through the overlay of historic elements/sculptures which will expand the National Park Service functions and visibility at Old State Street and Quincy Market. This overlay will be reinforced through the redesign of the New Congress Street corridor. The new pedestrian bridge at 60 State Street, a possible new bridge to connect the new courthouse to P-7 and the Orange Line stop and the redesign of open spaces which lie on either side of the Congress Street corridor. The underlying concept of monuments/memorials to "human rights" will be the creation of a new focus

point for City Hall Plaza to complement the redesigned fountain area, the open spaces and the corridor between the Green Line Station and the pedestrian proposed bridge. An international design competition should be held for this new element.

GOVERNMENT CENTER 2000

PROJECT AREA PLAN



DESIGN ELEMENTS

SKETCHES AND NARRATIVES

DRAWING #1: VIEW FROM GOV'T CTR. "T" STOP, IN THE DIRECTION OF FANEUIL HALL Foot Bridge

via

Ave. of Democracy

Design Improvements

The corridor leading to/from the "T" Stop to/from the Faneuil Hall area would be redesigned to (1) improve the primary view corridor and (2) facilitate pedestrian movement to and from the foot-bridge across New Congress Street (not shown). This would be accomplished by:

+ "T" Stop

- removal of steps (with the exception of those closest to City Hall) and subsequent creation of a transparent edge to the plaza closest to the Sears Crescent; through the use of planters rather than trees.
- creation of a lighted, tree-lined "path" leading to/from the footbridge, benches surrounding the trees to further "humanize" the setting;
- construction of a new canopy around the edge of the Bank of New England building;
- construction of an "information" building on the plaza between Bank of New England and City Hall

→ - New Scollay Sq Plaza @ "T" Stop w/ individual Flower Stand + News

Potential for Thematic Expression

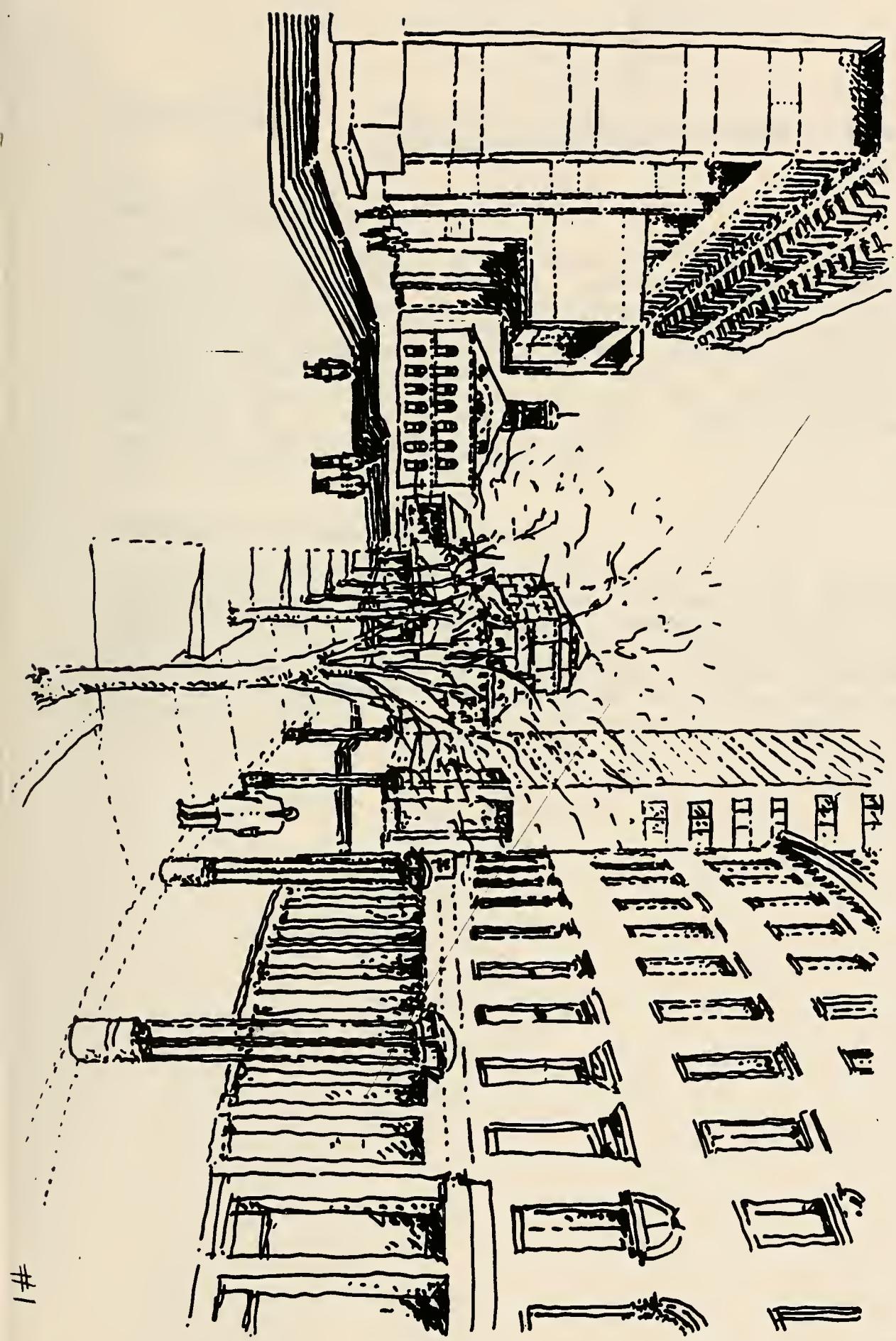
regarding Democracy

The "path" itself offers potential for thematic expression. Along with the other path from the "T" Stop through the Old North Church view corridor (Drawing 3), and New Congress Street (Drawing 6), this path forms a triangle of major thematic "avenues" within the Government Center area. (See overlay) The line from the State House to Faneuil Hall along which this path proceeds has led to the suggestion that it be named the "Avenue of Democracy."

Following on this theme, there is potential for statuary or other public art expressions along the path. The design of light poles, for example, might be enhanced by plaques, engravings, etc.

A principal ^{Plaza} area within this corridor for expression lies between City Hall and the Bank of New England building. Specifically, the area between the steps leading to Congress Street and the point at which the proposed footbridge connects to the Plaza is in need of redefinition either as a pavilion or park space. (Graham Gund has suggested a food concession usage.) We suggest a Information booth Human Rights.

- - Opportunity for 3 major memorial elements: @ Scollay Sq. / Camb. St. & Wash. St. Mall adj to City Hall + a series of elements along the Sears Crescent adj to new planters.



DRAWING #2:

VIEW OF "AVENUE OF DEMOCRACY" AND REDESIGNED
GOV'T CENTER "T" STOP

Design Improvements

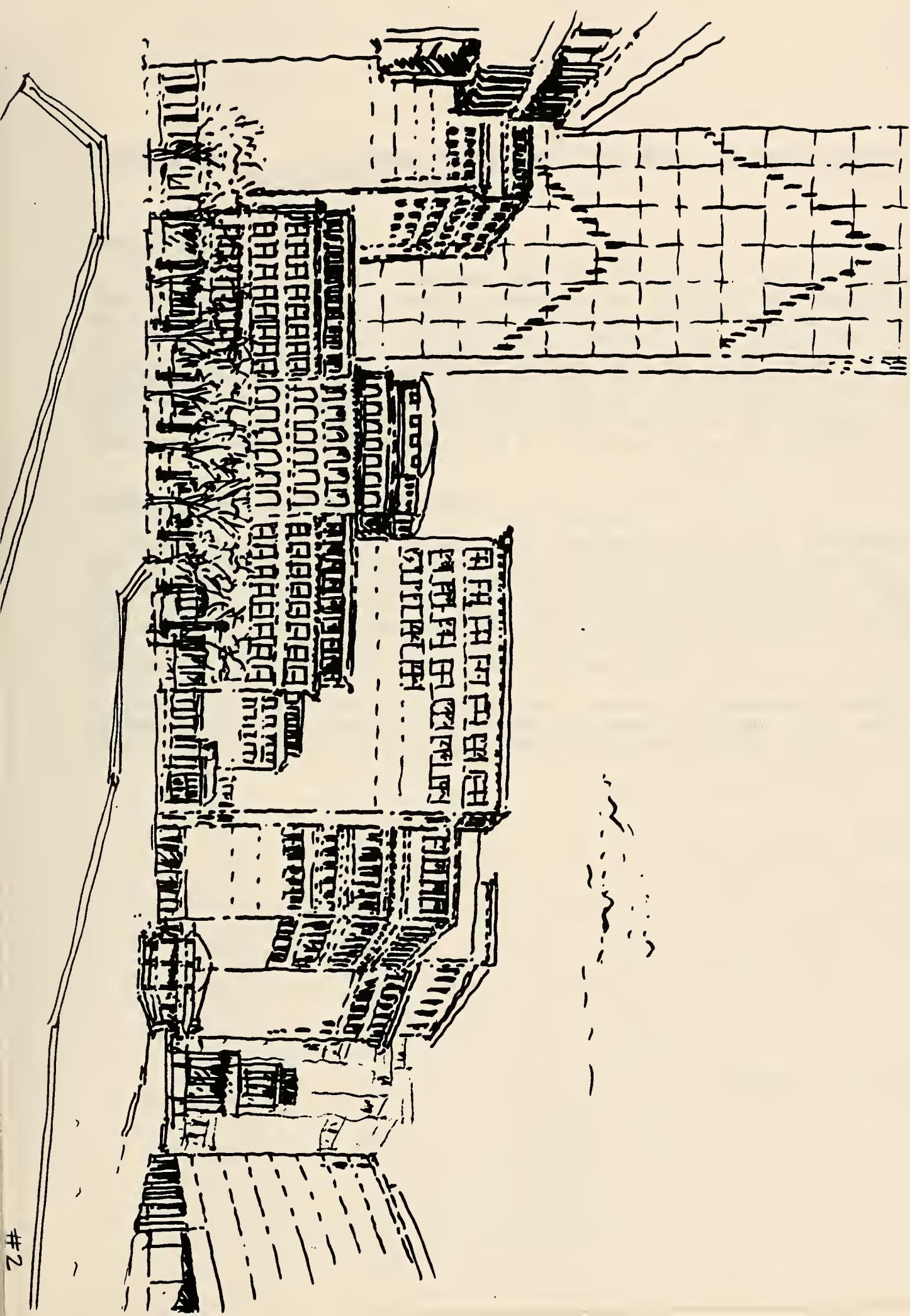
Having discussed the "avenue" in drawing #1, the design improvement here would be the redesign of the the "T" Stop to create a "Scollay Square", around the "T" Stop, including replication of the original "T" Station. It is proposed that the above-ground structure be (1) moved slightly to the north of its present location (approx. 20-30 feet) to accomodate the view corridor from Tremont Street to the Old North Church, and (2) centered on a view plaza platform. News kiosk/flower stands could be constructed at either end of the new stairs surrounding the "T" Stop. (See Project Area Map)

Potential for Thematic Expression

→ to allow view of Fanueil Hall from the New Scollay Sq. Plaza.

The area outside/around the "T" Stop serves primarily as an informational and orientation area, hence the need for a open view corridor to the new Federal Courthouse, Fanueil Hall/Quincy Market, City Hall and the North End. Directions and information on what may be seen and experienced in the Government Center area may be achieved through plaques or avenue signs pointing in either direction. will be visible from this plaza as one looks towards Old North Church.

a gateway plaza foyer to the larger Plaza, ~~and~~



DRAWING #3: VIEW FROM GOV'T CTR. "T" STOP, IN THE DIRECTION OF OLD NORTH CHURCH

Design Improvements

The construction of the new Federal Courthouse would improve the Old North Church viewing corridor by raising the building height above that of the existing low-rise Federal Building up to ± 125'-135' feet. A walkway would extend the length of the courthouse, with small pavilion buildings at each end. The pavilion between the JFK Building and the Courthouse would be used as an archive or public use building. (See Drawing #4) The pavilion at the Congress Street end would serve as an entrance to the footbridge connecting with the P-7 Garage. (See Drawing #6)

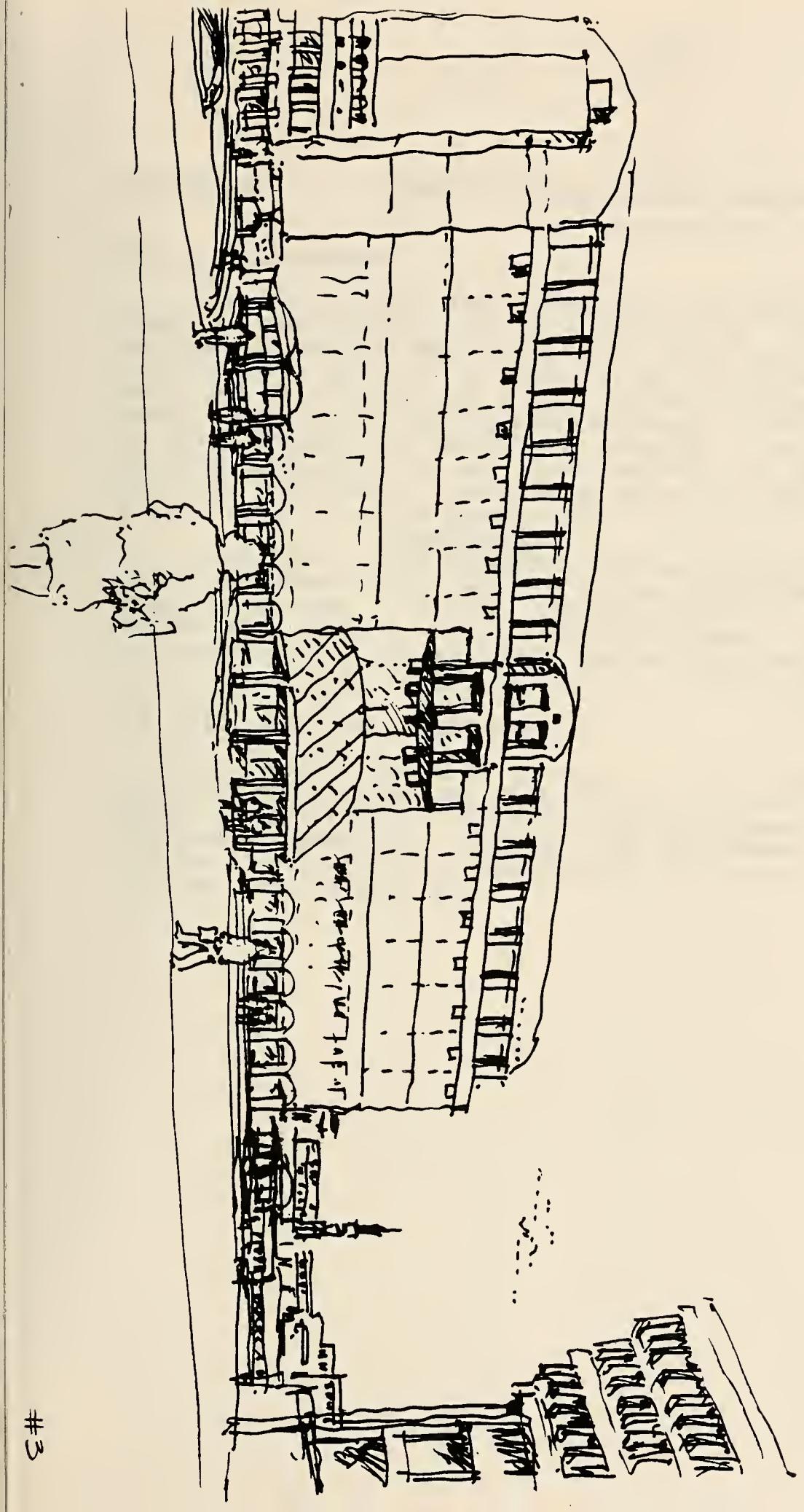
Potential for Thematic Expression *while the pavilion at the JFK building could be a memorial to Justice*

This second "path," given the prominence of the Courthouse and the line from the state and county court buildings leading to it, might be appropriately named the "Avenue of Justice." (Both the avenues of "justice" and "democracy" would lead to and connect with New Congress Street, which ~~might~~ be dedicated, along with the park, as the "Boulevard of the Rights of Man," or the "Boulevard of Human Rights.") (See Drawing #6) *could*

The design *Dedication of the Courthouse (eg. Robert F. Kennedy Federal Courthouse) would be an important expression along this path. Statues could also be placed in front of the courthouse.*

visual element and

- new construction @ the base of the JFK Building could be developed as a major archive for Human Right material. ~~The~~ *the* *the new base of the JFK building (not shown in the sketch) would create a* *playa* *in front of the JFK building as well as* *creating a human scale to the* ~~JFK~~ *architectural expression of the existing JFK Bldg.*



archive / JPK

DRAWING #4:

VIEW OF FEDERAL BUILDING AND COURTHOUSE JOINED

~~the new construction for Archive construction.~~

Design Improvements

~~plaza Entry now Federal~~

An open archway would lead from the JFK Federal Building and "JFK" Courthouse out onto City Hall Plaza. Next to the archway on the Courthouse side would be a small pavilion building, the architectural purpose of which would be to divide the fountain area and the Courthouse plaza, as well as reinforce the public entry between the two Federal Buildings. Potential uses of the pavilion include an archive or memorial. An "infill" structure is also proposed for the space between the existing JFK Towers and the Courthouse, possible purposes of which are a passport office, archive and/or restaurant.

~~would be a~~

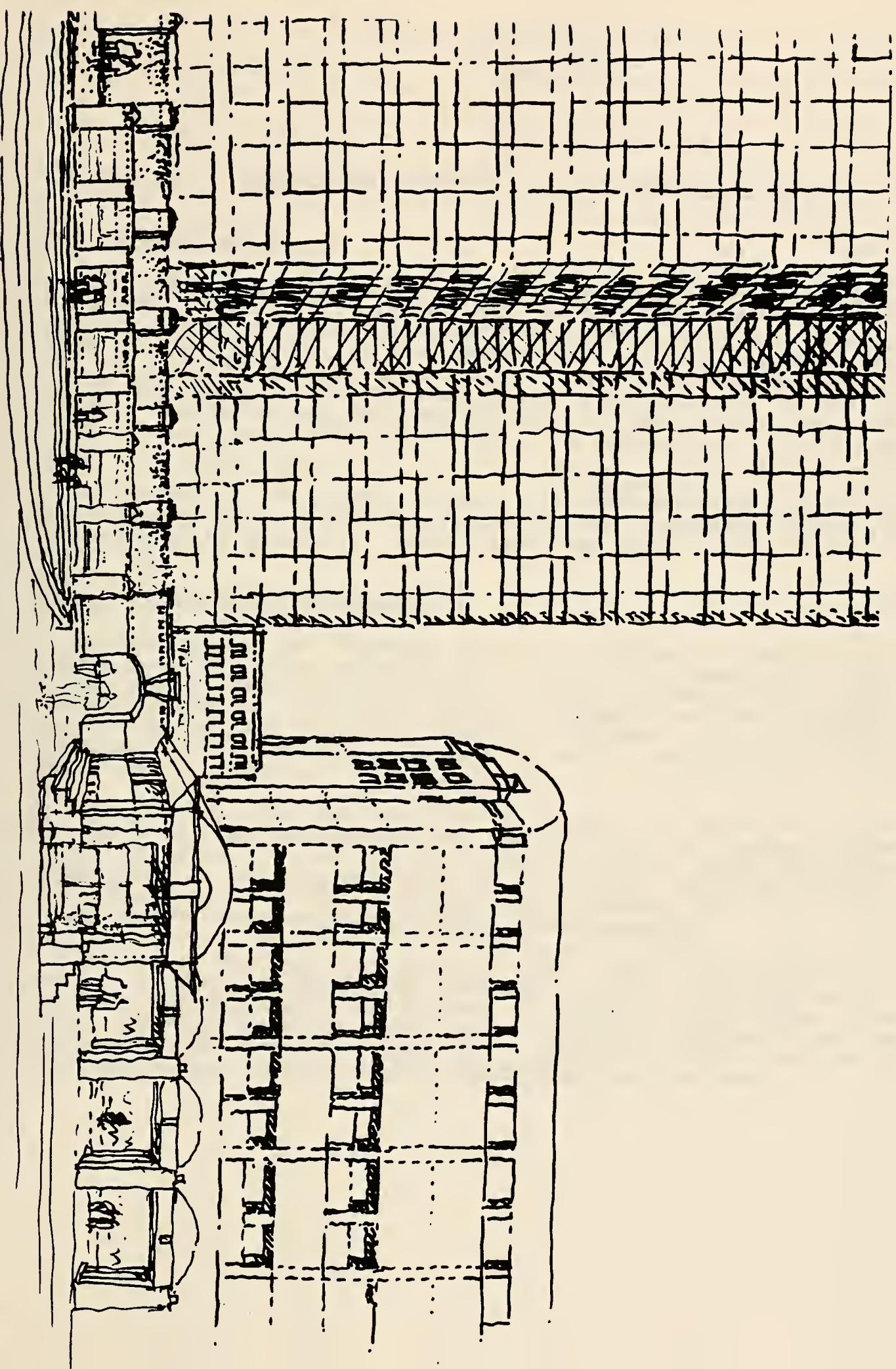
A sectional, glass-covered walkway is proposed to extend the length of Courthouse, leading to the footbridge crossing over to the P-7 Garage. In the background is a connecting corridor between the Federal Building and Courthouse. Due to the length of the plaza edge formed by the Federal Building and Courthouse, there

exists a need to define 2 sub areas: 1 the fountain as a memorial or

Potential for Thematic Expression 2 the Courthouse plaza entry.

This drawing provides a view of the proposed columns and ~~waterwall~~ separating the Federal Building and the fountain. As noted in Drawing #3, statuary may be placed in front of the Courthouse, presumably between the Courthouse building and the covered walkway, to memorialize individuals associated with justice, civil rights etc.

Creating a more human scale
around the fountain area



DRAWING #5: VIEW OF THE FOUNTAIN AREA FROM CAMBRIDGE STREET

Design Improvements

The principal design improvement would be the construction of a pathway formed by columns and a ~~solid~~ "waterwall." The pathway would run from the Cambridge Street end of the fountain east in the direction of New Congress Street, but stopping short of the easterly end of the fountain. The ~~solid~~ waterwall would be on the Federal Building side of the path and rise 12 feet in height, ~~with a walkway on either side~~. Columns forming the ~~other~~ sides of the path would be shorter and nearer to the fountain area.

Trellis Structure

Enclosure of the space between the ~~JFK~~ Building Towers and the westerly side of the Courthouse is also proposed, though not reflected in this drawing. (See Project Area Plan)

JFK Building + Trellis

Potential for Thematic Expression

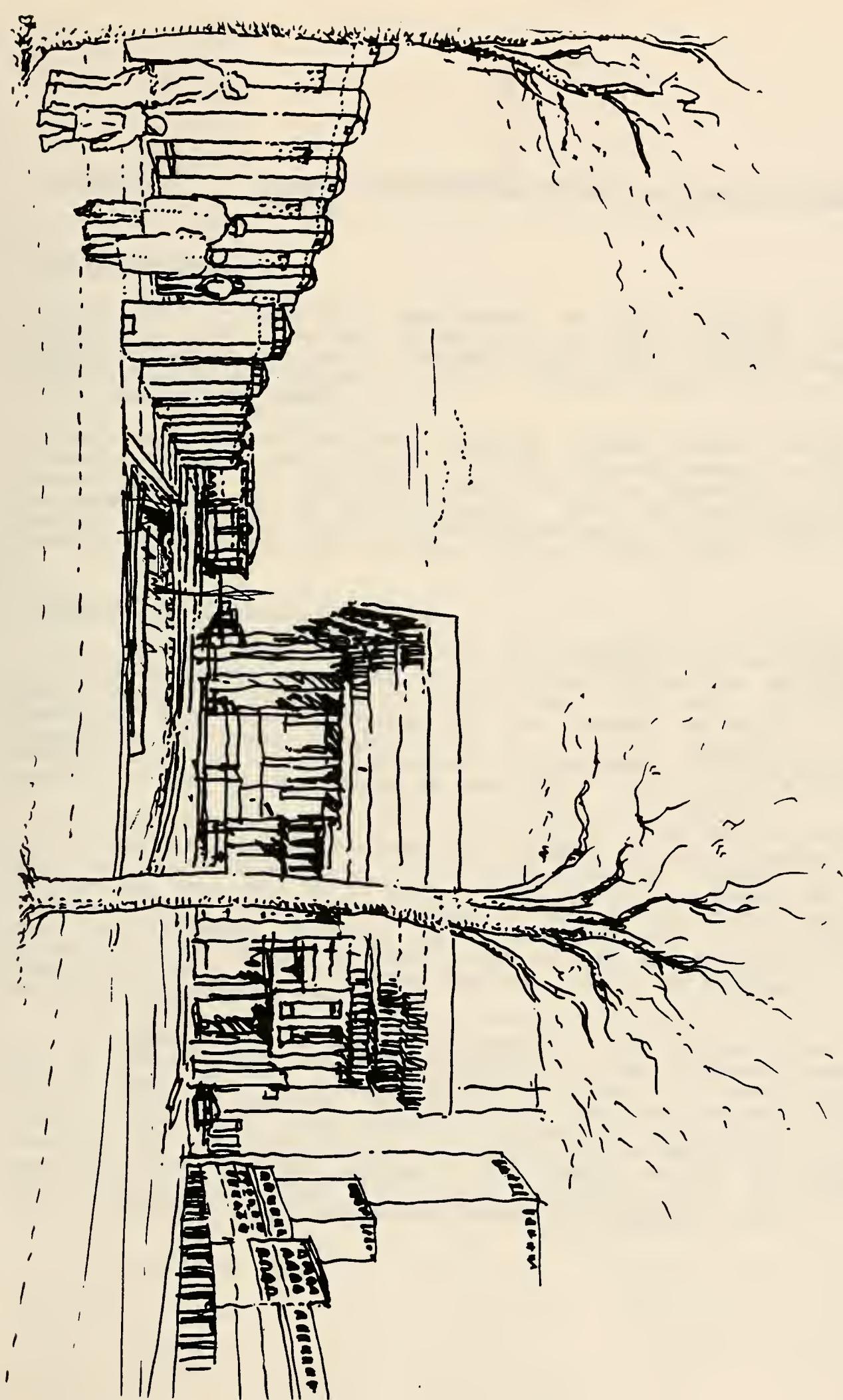
Dedication of the fountain area to a cause or concept (eg. American Civil Rights Movement, etc.) would be appropriate. Such a dedication would be consistent with the "Avenue of Justice" concept extending from the fountain through the view corridor. The ~~waterwall and columns~~ could be enhanced with engravings, plaques or small statues highlighting major events/actors in the Civil Rights Movement.

Trellis

In front of the JFK Building and near the backside of the ~~waterwall~~ may be an appropriate location for the Martin Luther King sculpture. Benches or other seating could abut the ~~waterwall~~ and the shorter existing wall along Cambridge Street. The radial edge of the fountain area bordering City Hall Plaza would also be strengthened with ~~transparent elements~~.

benches or low seating elements

Extending out from the fountain area, City Hall Plaza itself would continue to symbolize "freedom" through its openness to movement and expression of protest as well as celebration. The Plaza activity would represent an effective counterpoint to the contemplative setting of the fountain area, while a rights/freedoms symmetry would exist between the two areas.



DRAWING #6:

VIEW OF NEW CONGRESS STREET FROM THE GOV'T CENTER GARAGE

Design Improvements

The most significant improvement in this drawing is the construction of a second footbridge over New Congress Street, this one connecting the P-7 Garage (left side) with the proposed Federal Courthouse (right). Covered entrance ways would meet the footbridge at both ends.

Redefinition of the New Congress Street median strip is proposed through construction of light fixtures/banner poles. A second proposal for the median calls for tree plantings; a third is ~~being~~ sketched by Alex Krieger. Each of these proposals reflect alternatives to the "iron hoops" barriers presently under consideration by the City's Capital Planning Department.

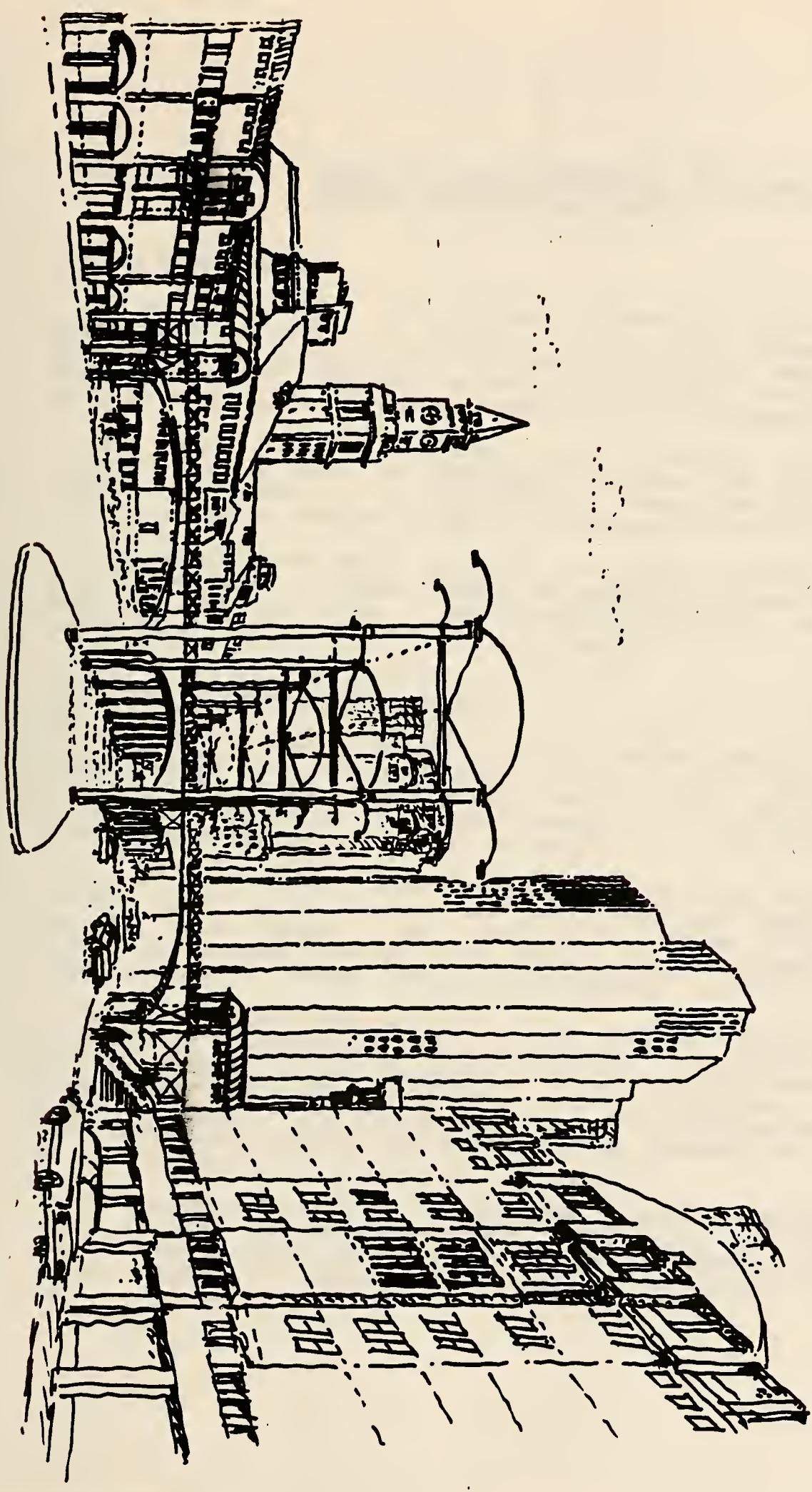
Potential for Thematic Expression

New Congress Street offers the best opportunity to focus on the international aspect of human rights within the Government Center area. As noted in #3, the street itself might be renamed something like the "Boulevard of the Rights of Man" or the "Boulevard of Human Rights." It is in this regard that the median strip could be redesigned to express an international context, linked to the avenues of "democracy" and "justice." *Symbolic* *at base of City Hall of the sidewalk is widened*

The park between Union Street and New Congress Street is best suited for exhibiting international symbols of human rights (eg. the holocaust memorial, Irish independence, Ghandi, French Revolution, anti-apartheid, etc.). One question in regard to the "international" theme of the park is whether the Curley statues can be relocated, possibly to a site closer to City Hall. Another is whether the proposed sight of the POW/MIA memorial is proper in its proximity to New Congress Street, or whether it can be sited elsewhere on the Plaza.

The inclusion of a holocaust museum on the ground floor of the P-7 Garage leads to the suggestion of other thematic uses of ground floor space. Similar potential exists for the Congress Street level of the new courthouse and the New Congress Street side of City Hall. This section of City Hall (not shown in this drawing) may be redevelopable as a site for an "archive" for the area or other thematic purpose. This would involve eliminating the parking spaces under City Hall. Alternatives to an archive for the site are retail stores and restaurants/sidewalk cafes.

— No consensus has been reached regarding the redesign of the median strip vs. widened sidewalks or the scale or design of the elements that would be along the street. This issue will be further studied by Alex Krieger.



DRAWING #7:

VIEW OF BOSTON MASSACRE SITE AND BANK OF NEW ENGLAND ENTRANCE AND PLAZA

Design Improvements

A small section of roadway connecting State Street and Devonshire Street (in front of Bank of Greece) would be eliminated to provide an enlarged area for a memorial to the Boston Massacre. Access to Devonshire Street from State Street will be retained by directing traffic around the memorial site.

The Bank of New England Plaza bordering State and New Congress Street would be redesigned to make the entrance street-level and larger. A sequence of steps would be used to accomodate grade changes on the New Congress Street side ~~at the new arcade~~.

The Washington Mall side of the Bank building would be retrofitted with a glass arcade to provide a human scale, to the building and the area. The existing waterwall would also be redesigned,

redesigned to a more human scale
and memorial elements could be added at both ends of the mall.

Potential for Thematic Expression

The erection of a memorial to the Boston Massacre would add significantly to the prominence of the Old State House and vicinity. A second possibility would be for a statue to be placed commemorating the first reading of the Declaration of Independence outside the Old State House.

An enlarged, more open Bank of New England entrance would provide very visible space for public art and better views of the Old State House. One question is whether the presence of public art across from the Old State House and Massacre memorial would compete or "overdo it" at this location.

Washington Mall (not shown in this drawing) could also benefit from design improvements and the addition of public art. The current obstacle course-arrangement of walls and steps could be eliminated and replaced with a pathway similar to the one described above. The two ends of the Mall, particularly the City Hall end, offer significant potential for statuary or other forms of expression.

Not depicted in this drawing are potential changes in the front entrance of 60 State Street. Plans for the connection of Graham Gund's footbridge to the plaza on the backside of 60 State Street suggest an additional opportunity for public art in this area.

